

PRE-SCHOOL INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Ballycarry Playgroup,
Carrickfergus, County Antrim

Voluntary playgroup

Report of a Safeguarding
Inspection in June 2017



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION OF BALLYCARRY PLAYGROUP, CARRICKGERGUS (3AB-0116)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of safeguarding at Ballycarry Playgroup on 16 June 2017 during a district visit.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding children are unsatisfactory¹.

The following matters of concern were observed, brought to the attention of the acting leader and need to be addressed urgently.

- There is no identified designated child protection officer.
- The chair of the committee has not yet completed the necessary child protection training.
- There was only one trained member of staff present, along with a parent volunteer, on the day of the district visit; this puts an unreasonable onus on the staff member to manage all of the interactions with the children and consequently an overemphasis on supervision rather than high quality and sustained interactions to promote learning.
- The children were taken outside without sufficient planning to minimise the risk of them leaving the grounds.
- The pre-school programme has areas for improvement that require urgent attention; the room is poorly resourced, the learning experiences lack interest and challenge to maintain the children's involvement.
- Too many of the children lack the ability to share, take turns and self-regulate their emotions and behaviours and to develop their own play and creative ideas.

The ETI will return to the playgroup within six working weeks to monitor progress in addressing the issues identified.

¹ The Department of Education will seek assurance from the Early Years Organisation that they are working with the playgroup in relation to the inspection report.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION OF BALLYCARRY PLAYGROUP IN JUNE 2017

SAFEGUARDING

The Education and Training Inspectorate returned to Ballycarry Playgroup on 22 September 2017 as a follow-up to the safeguarding inspection which took place on the 16 June 2017; the purpose of the visit was to ensure that the safeguarding issues, evaluated as unsatisfactory during the district inspection visit, had been addressed.

Since the last visit a number of changes have been made:

- a new leader, and additional member of staff and designated and deputy designated child protection officers have been appointed;
- the outdoor area is no longer registered for use by the playgroup; and
- the quality of the staff interaction, the quality of the learning environment and the children's behaviours have all improved.

On the basis of the evidence available, the revised arrangements reflect broadly the requirements of the relevant Departments. The playgroup needs to:

- review and update with the new staff team the policies on promoting positive behaviour;
- record more explicitly a definition of the restricted duties of the new member of staff waiting for their Access NI certificate; and
- ensure the new chairperson attends appropriate child protection training as soon as possible.

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